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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 ABU DHABI 001015

FOR SECRETARY NAPOLITANO FROM AMBASSADOR OLSON

NOFORN
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SUBJECT: SCENESETTER FOR SECRETARY NAPOLITANO'S VISIT TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Classified by Ambassador Richard Olson, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Madam Secretary: We look forward to your November 7-8 visit to Abu Dhabi.

¶2. (SBU) In the past five years, the United Arab Emirates has emerged as one of the economic powerhouses of the region (our largest export market in the Middle East) and attained a commensurate level of political influence. The UAE has troops in Afghanistan, is an important political player in Pakistan, and its support is sought by leaders throughout the Middle East, and further afield. Although a tiny country, geographically and demographically, the UAE punches well above its weight class in international circles.

¶3. (C) Our bilateral relationship has grown from a military to military core (dating back to the 1991 Gulf war) to one in which the full range of USG Agencies interact with UAE counterparts on counter-terrorism, economics, law enforcement, even notionally domestic issues like Education. The leadership of the UAE knows that it counts on US military power for its security and on US prosperity for its own economic well-being. Our popularity with the general public waxes and wanes (President Obama remains incredibly popular; not so for all of our policies). Consequently, the UAE embraces us privately, while publicly maintaining a more neutral line. Few are fooled.

Iran

¶4. (S/NF) The UAE leadership sees Iran as its primary external threat, and one that is existential in nature. Like the rest of the international community, the UAE finds the idea of an Iran with nuclear weapons unacceptable and thinks this eventuality would lead to nuclear arms race in the Middle East. At least as worrying to Emiratis is Iran's aspirations for regional hegemony, which it realizes through terrorist proxies (Hizballah, HAMAS, possibly underground organizations in the Arab Gulf countries). Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed (MbZ) is skeptical that Iran can be convinced to end its nuclear weapons program, and is not convinced that the international community will adopt tough sanctions. In other words, he sees the logic of war dominating the region, and this thinking explains his near obsessive efforts to build up his armed forces and the Critical National Infrastructure Authority (CNIA).

Three Brothers and One Cousin, all Shaykhs

¶5. (C) There is no single UAE counterpart to DHS, so we have requested appointments with Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed (MbZ), Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Saif bin Zayed, National Security Advisor Hazza bin Zayed, and Director of the Critical National Infrastructure Authority Ahmed bin Tahnoun.

¶6. (C) Shaykh Mohammed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, or MbZ in USG speak, is

the man who runs the United Arab Emirates. Officially he is the Crown Prince of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi (the most important principality of the seven emirate confederation) and his only federal title is Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces; in fact he is the key decision maker on national security issues. He will make deferential noises about his "boss" (elder half-brother President Khalifa, a distant and uncharismatic personage), but we assess that he has authority in all matters except for final decisions on oil policy and major state expenditures.

¶7. (C) Aged 47, MbZ is a leader not just in the UAE, but more broadly in the Middle East, where he is seen as a particularly dynamic member of the generation succeeding the geriatric cases who have dominated the region for decades. He is a reformer, actively seeking to improve the life of his citizens and the UAE's future through better education and health care, and through economic diversification, including investments in clean energy to prepare his citizenry for a post-hydrocarbon future. He is proud of the fact that despite having had the option of life of privilege, he rose through the ranks of the UAE Armed Forces, earning his wings as a helicopter pilot and retains a common touch that appeals to Emiratis.

¶8. (C) Shaykh Saif is Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior. Age 41, he has been with the Ministry of Interior for his entire career, and was recently elevated to become Deputy Prime Minister. He is the eldest of the second largest group of Zayed's sons (the children of Shaykha Moza), many of whom are just coming into maturity. This emerging power base within the family may explain the recent bureaucratic ascendancy of the MOI.

¶9. (C) Shaykh Hazza is National Security Advisor, which is not analogous to the eponymous US position. Rather, he is the head of

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the State Security Department (i.e., the CIA/FBI equivalent). SSD enjoys a close working relationship with the USG, and is one of our closest partners in the Middle East. Shaykh Hazza is not a detail person, and will be more interested in big picture. Hazza is a younger full brother of MbZ, one of the powerful Bani Fatima (the six sons of Shaykha Fatima).

¶10. (C) Shaykh Ahmed bin Tahnoun is a cousin of MbZ's, the son of the most senior Shaykh in the Nahyan family. He was trained as an Apache helicopter pilot, and has a very military bearing (direct gaze, erect posture, few words). As head of the Critical National Infrastructure Authority he is an empowered individual with adequate resources to fill a critical mission for the UAE.

The Agenda

¶11. (S/NF) You will be among the first Obama Administration Cabinet Officials to visit the UAE. Accordingly, it will be important to hear out UAE concerns in the following areas:

--Iran: MbZ will lay out his concerns about Iran, and argue for the importance of protecting his population and critical infrastructure. In practical terms, this means building up CNIA, which has ambitious ideas about cooperation with the US Coast Guard (40 percent of UAE oil facilities are offshore, and they are the most vulnerable to Iranian attack). You can expect MbZ and Shaykh Ahmed to push hard for a Coast Guard presence in the UAE.

--Other CNIA Issues: Shaykh Ahmed may ask about the status of his proposals (made to U/S Beers during his July trip) for stationing TSA personnel in the UAE and pre-clearing UAE aircraft flying to the US. They may also brief you on plans for protecting the UAE's eventual nuclear power generating facilities (we have just concluded a civil nuclear cooperation agreement with the UAE).

--API/PNR: We have had a series of successful engagements with SSD on establishing a program of sharing passenger information, and you should thank Shaykh Hazza for the cooperation to date.

--Immigration Academy: Shaykh Saif has been pushing for US

participation in an Immigration Training Academy that he is establishing. We are currently reviewing late UAE changes to a draft MOU.

--Cash Courier Training: After repeated urging from the USG, here and in Washington, the UAE has established a Joint Task force with us to deal with the threat of Taliban using cash couriers to support operations in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The first meeting of the task force took place on 7 September and the UAEG is currently considering a training agenda. You should thank Shaykh Hazza for this initiative.

¶12. (U) Again, Madam Secretary, we look forward to your visit to the UAE.

OLSON